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No. II.

[COMMUNICATED BY JOHN O'DONOVAN, ESQ., LL.D., M.R.I.A.]

One of the best modern poems in the Irish language, composed in the year 1764 by the Rev. James Lawler, P.P. of Oning and Templeorum, in Iverk, relates in a particular manner to the witches of Sliabh-na-m-ban, and I am most anxious that your Society should preserve it. If you will do so, I shall be most happy, at some future period, to furnish you with a copy of the original and a faithful translation, as the author was related to my family, and as it was from his books and handwriting that I first learned to read the native language.

There are many other legends connected with our native County besides those given by Mr. Dunne, which, in my opinion, are valuable for the purpose of comparison with our ancient legendary stories. Of these I am anxious to lay before you a few specimens, that you may be able to judge how far they are worth preserving.

On the townland in which I was born, situate in the parish of Kilcolumb, barony of Ida, and County of Kilkenny, there is an elevation called Con-bhuidhe, in connexion with which, and to account for its name, the following legend is told, which is so like some of

* Dr. O'Donovan conceives the version of the legend of the witches of Sliabh-na-m-ban, given in the preceding pages, to be very much modernised: the spinning-wheel not being more than eight generations in use. A Kilkenny bard celebrates the superiority of the spinning-wheel over the distaff, in a poem beginning "Coiseal éar níl tuisfíor fearfa ó éarínis a b-éaríonnn túisíonnn" (the twirling distaff will spin no longer since the spinning-wheel has come into vogue). With regard to the same legend, it is further said by the peasantry, that a party who attempted to make their way to *Tir-na-n-og* through a cave in Sliabh-na-m-ban, were met by the witches, who cried out, "Roileán na fóla asur cniácar na b-pucos" (the riddle of blood, and the sieve of the puddings), whereat the adventurers, petrified with fear, instantly returned.—EDS.

the legends in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, that it seems surprising it had not been interpolated into it at an early period :—

St. Patrick travelling through the plains of Ossory, to see what progress his predecessor St. Kieran* had made in the conversion of the inhabitants, came to a remarkable hill, then called Cnoc-na-radharc, i.e., hill of the sights or views, which commanded a prospect, wide and various, of the adjacent rivers, harbours and mountains ; and being struck with the beauty of the situation, he resolved upon building a church there, or as some say, a town. He set to work, and collected a number of labourers and artizans to the place. While the work was progressing, a woman who lived in the adjacent village of Ballincrea, sent St. Patrick a present of an animal cooked in a dish for his dinner. After the saint had viewed the animal for some time, he formed an idea in his mind, that it was an unclean beast, and did not wish to taste of its flesh ; and, moreover, as he found some of the inhabitants of the district but ill instructed in Christianity, and others stubborn Pagans, he conceived the idea that this present was sent with a view to insult him. So, laying down the dish upon a large stone, he knelt down upon the same stone, and prayed to God to restore to life whatever animal was there cooked. His prayer was heard, and to the astonishment of the workmen, a *coirn buíde* (yellow hound) sprang from the dish, and ran in the direction of the conflux of the Three Waters. St. Patrick, horrified at the sight, desired the workmen to go in pursuit of it, and kill it ; for, that it would blast the fruits of the earth and injure all living things in its course. The workmen, obeying the saint's orders, followed the yellow hound with spades, pick-axes, shovels and crowbars, and overtook it exactly a mile to the east of the place from whence it started, and succeeded in killing it. They buried its body on the road side, and over its grave sprang up a stunted white-thorn, called *Sgeirín-na-coir* (the little thorn of the hound), which remains to the present day ; and, in perpetual memorial of the miracle, all the stones for one mile exhibit the tracks of the hound's feet ; and that on which St. Patrick knelt contains a hollow, which is believed to be the impression of his knee, and is called *Glún Phadraig*. This hollow is usually filled with water, which is considered sacred.†

* It is said traditionally that St. Patrick met St. Kieran for the first time, A.D. 439, at the church of Rathkieran in Iverk ; that Kieran did not wish to acknowledge Patrick's superiority, and therefore that he received him very coolly, and refused to be dictated to by him in ecclesiastical matters. St. Patrick was displeased at his reception, and predicted that the inhabitants of Iverk should always remain *Durnauns*, and be called by this name to the end of the world. A similar story is told of St. Ibar at Beggery, in the harbour of Wexford.

† I remember having visited it in company with William, son of William, son of William, son of Cornelius O'Donovan, who had a sore knee, the supposed result of a *shot* received from the fairies, whose road or pass was believed to extend across his father's farm-yard. This boy washed his sore knee in the water of *Glún Phadraig*, and though it did him no ser-

The saint maledicted the wicked woman and her progeny, and prayed that the village of Ballinorea should never, throughout all time, be without a lame, or a dumb, or a deaf person. His prayer was granted, and the tradition is, that its effects remain to the present day; for the inhabitants are remarkable for indocility and viciousness, and for a total incapability of civilization!

Nothing but the absence of the sacred muse from the locality prevented this story from getting into the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, for I firmly believe that it is as old, and perhaps as true as many others which Colgan has adjudged as interpolations into that celebrated work. The story of Boher-na-mias, in the County of Clare, is not unlike it; but a legend exactly similar is told of St. Patrick in the uncultivated mountains of Sliabh-Chairbre, in the townland of Aughnacoon, parish of Killoe, barony of Granard, and County of Longford, where the saint's preaching was opposed by the impious Carbry, the brother of the monarch Laeghaire, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages. The saint's awful curse against the district and the people is preserved in the following lines obtained at Granard and at Ballynamuck, in the year 1836:—

“Պօ Թալլաճ րժօր ար Թօժր-Ղլաճ Շալրե,
 Ղար տշաճ ան Թաճաճ ծան Թար Ելաճ,
 Պալլալչիմ ան Բարանի Բար ՚ր ան ծալրե,
 Բաճ րժեճար շաճ, ՚ր Ե ծալլալչեար շրլան.
 Պալլաճ Թե ար Դա շլեանտայն շարճա;
 Ղար Բեյճեար յօղտ Բօժիւրի* Բէլլ,
 Ղար Բեյճեար յօղտ Գճ Լիճ՝ Դա Բարճա,
 Բաճ Լօղլալչեար Բեանա յր յր Բբէլլ.
 Պալլալչիմ Դա ծալրե :—Ելաճ րլաճ շօլճե
 Շան Եօլր րժօր ար ղիճ Դա Դշար;
 Ալ րլաճ շաճ Լա, ՚ր ԳՅ շօլճ շաճ օլճե,
 Բաճ Ելաճ սլրՅե Գ՝ ղլճ Գ՝ ր Բեար Գ՝ Բար.”

Accursed be Carbry's rugged mountains,
 Wherein this hound was served to me,
 Accursed its heaths, its streams and fountains,
 As long as man and time shall be.
 Accursed its glens; may no kind showers
 Descend into them from the skies;
 May neither grass, nor herbs, nor flowers
 Be ever seen in them to rise!
 Accursed the people; now I strike them
 With my red bolt, and seal their doom;
 May all good men for e'er dislike them,
 May they sink in murkiest gloom.

vice, he firmly believed that this was owing to his own unworthiness, and not to any want of efficacy in the sacred water. This William is still living, and is now in the fiftieth year of his age, and though he has had recourse to many sacred fountains, the effects of the elfin *shot* still remain in his knee.

* Բօժիւրի is understood by the people of Granard to mean *luxuriance*, like Խուճ with us.

The Tripartite Life is very meagre in its details of the transactions of the Irish apostle in the ancient Ossory, but I have been long of opinion that the want might be supplied, to some extent, from oral tradition. Take another story of St. Patrick which was very current when I was a boy living in Ida, and fond of all sorts of ghost stories and fairy scenes, which had no foundation except in the imaginations of old men and women :—

St. Patrick, proceeding from Laoighis into the adjoining territory of Ui-Duach in Ossory, commenced the erection of a church at a remarkable place near the banks of the river Dineen ; but he was insulted by the chief of this territory, who forcibly drove him from that beautiful locality. Patrick, who appears to have been a man of great force of character, had no notion of allowing this insult to pass unrevenged, and he proceeded to hurl the red bolt of his malediction against the chief of Ui-Duach and his descendants. He opened his sacred lips to curse the territory, and pronounced the words *Ḃhalluizim, malluizim Uí-Duac* (I curse, I curse Ui-Duach) ! But one of his disciples, who was related to the noble family of Ui-Duach, with a view to avert the curse from the territory and the people, added immediately after, *Bíod ríu ar díon a z-cruac* (let that curse be upon the thatch of their corn-ricks). This rhyme, it appears, was sufficient to avert the curse, so far as it was pronounced by St. Patrick ; but his anger was not yet appeased, and he opened his lips again to curse the territory, saying, *Ḃhalluizim, malluizim Uí-Duac* ! the disciple added, *Bíod ríu ar bárr na luacra* (let that be on the tops of the rushes). The saint's anger was still up, and he commenced his curse a third time, saying, *Ḃhalluizim, malluizim Uí-Duac* ! and the disciple averted it once more from the lands and the people by adding, *Bíod ríu ar an Deizhíu ruad* (let this be on the red Dineen). St. Patrick, seeing the counteracting lines of his disciple so opportunely added after his own maledicting ones, felt his anger subsiding, and believing that his disciple was inspired by heaven thus to save his native territory from a heavy malediction, left the matter so. And, behold, the effects of the three curses, thus modified, still remain wonderfully plain in the territory of Ui-Duach ! The thatch of the stacks and hay-ricks is there most furiously assailed and stripped by the winds, the tops of the rushes exhibit all the withering influence of the curse ; and the river Dineen, which has deserved for itself the sobriquet of “the red and deceitful Dineen,” is so subject to sudden floods and inundations as to sweep away and destroy not only men, cattle, and corn, but also the church-yards which lie within the reach of its floods.

The belief among the ancient Irish was, and still is, that a curse once pronounced must fall in some direction. If it has been deserved by him on whom it is pronounced, it will fall upon him sooner or later, but if it has not, then it will return upon the person who pronounced it. They compare it to a wedge with which a woodman cleaveth tim-

ber. A poem was composed on the Dineen river about the beginning of the last century, by a local rhymmer, whose brother had been drowned in one of its sudden and treacherous inundations. The burden of this song or rather dirge was, “*Ḃ ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ*” (O red Dineen of falsehood, entirely thou hast got my curse)! I wish some of your members could get you a copy of this dirge, which is so characteristic of the peasantry of Ui-Duach. It used to be sung at the fire-sides, even at my side of the County, about thirty years since. What may be its fate now I know not. You will find a story similar to that about the cursing of Ui-Duach, in the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick (lib. ii. c. 17), published by Colgan.*

These legends belong to Christian times: but the story of the witches of Sliabh-na-m-ban is almost wholly Pagan and untinged with Christianity. There is also another class of superstitions of a purely Pagan and ante-Christian origin, which are well worthy of preservation, as preserving strong primæval features of man in his natural state. Of this kind is, the belief that certain lakes are inhabited by a supernatural species of animals, such as horses, cows, dragons, &c. The following family story will afford a specimen; my grandmother used to tell it:—

Shortly after the Revolution, when the Archdeacons of Erck forfeited their estates in the northern part of the County of Kilkenny, my great-great-grandfather (Patrick Archdeacon, alias Mac Oda, father of John, father of Mary, mother of Edmond, father of J. O'Donovan) settled on the lands of Tinnahoe, in Iverk. On his land was situated a small lake, out of which horses, of black colour and very beautiful symmetry, were observed to emerge; and he became very anxious to learn what sort these were. He learned after some time that they were enchanted horses which had inhabited this lough from a very remote period, and his informant, who was skilled in the “black art” and in fairy lore, instructed him how he might catch one of these beautiful animals and keep it. Complying with the directions of his sage instructor, he caught a mare, which remained with him till she had seven

* “*Aliâ quadam vice vir sanctus Temoriâ profectus est ad montem [rectè Collem] Usneach animo Ecclesiam ibi extruendi: sed ei opposuerunt se duo filii Nielli, fratresque Laogarii Regis, Fiachus et Enda: quos vir Dei primo benignè allocutus promittebat si permitterent Ecclesiam in Dei honorem in eo amoeno loco excitari, ejusdem Ecclesiæ moderatores et rectores ex ipsorum progenie fore desumendos. Sed cum illi non solum ejus prædicationi et benevolæ propositioni non acquiescerent, sed etiam per manus attractum eum violentè expelli curarent: tunc vir Dei in tantæ injuriæ justam ultionem coepit jaculum maledictionis in ipsos, eorumque posteros injicere. Et cum os, in hunc finem aperiens, diceret; *maledictio*; tunc S. Secundinus ejus discipulus inchoatam sententiam ex ore ejus eripiens, et complens, subjunxit; *super lapides montis Usneach*. Placuit viro Dei discipuli pia miseratio et intercessio, et sententiam ab eo prolatam ratam habuit. Mira res! ab illo in hunc usque diem lapides isti, quasi illius maledictionis succumbentes plagæ, nulli structuræ aptæ reperiuntur, alterive humano deserviuntur usui. Unde abinde in proverbium abiit, ut si quando lapis, aliave materia destinato non deserviat usui, ex montis Usneach lapidibus esse vulgo dicatur.*”—*Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 131, col. 2.

foals. At last, Mac Oda, forgetting the instructions which he had received from his friend, violated the rules by means of which he was to keep this beautiful mare in his possession : he used the halter, in which he had caught her, for common purposes, and, what was worse than all, he scolded the animal herself, called her ugly names, and mentioned the name of the devil. As soon as she heard the name of the evil one, she neighed *seven times*, after a strange manner, broke loose from his grasp, and ran towards the lake, whither she was followed by her seven black foals. Mac Oda pursued them to the brink of the water, and saw the mare and her foals plunge into its bosom, the mare first, and then her foals in succession according to their ages. He never saw them from that day forth, till a period of seven years had elapsed, but his old fairy instructor was dead, and he forgot the mode by which to attempt to recapture them, if indeed that was possible. The details of the story are very long, such as that the halter was made of *gads*, or withes of the witch hazel, which was never to be used, but kept tied round the collar-beam of the stable in which the animal was fed, and the floor of which was to be swept every morning with a *rcuab ʒjol-caʒe*, i.e., besoms made of the *genista*, or broom, &c. But I believe that this story is not confined to our country. I find traces of it in Luther's Table-talk, and even in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.*

The stories connected with the *oll-þýlar*, or huge serpents, inhabitants of certain lakes, are, I believe, common to all the Irish parts of Ireland ; but these stories are so modified by the local reciters that it is only by comparing them all that we can obtain a true reading.

When I was very young there existed a considerable lake (since drained) called Loch Cuillinn, or Holly lake, in the townland of Nicholas-town, parish of Dunkitt, and close to Gaulstown, in the barony of Igrine. It was formed by a number of streams and brooks issuing from Tory-hill, Carraig-a-chait, and the other neighbouring high grounds. But though this was evident to any one at all acquainted with hydraulics and the theory of rain and springs, superstition attributed its original formation to a wicked witch, who wished to destroy a number of young men who were hurling on the plain over which its

* The oldest reference to a belief in supernatural aquatic horses of this kind, that I have yet discovered, is found in a vellum manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin (H. 2. 16, pp. 242, 243). It is so extraordinary a passage that I am tempted to lay it here before the reader with a literal translation. I draw no inference but leave the passage to speak for itself:—

“*Три х-амъна ʒилһне Даллаһ, ʒ Тју Соʒаһ, ʒ Тореcc Диома лејџ; ʒијл лејттеач*
Даллаһ оcor Дам Диле.”

“*ʒијл лејттеач Даллаһ : ceанһ буиһе ʒаһ; деһаһ бујлcc ʒобанһ олceанһ, ʒ ech*
уфрј no бае ʒ ʒоb loch ʒ coeb һа cилл, ʒ һ-е до cуаһс аһ иʒиј ʒо c-ʒаcaһуc, co
и-деһʒеһе ʒо ијл ʒује.”

Tria mirabilia de Glenn-Dallain in Tironiâ, viz. Aper de Druim-liath; Bestia de Letter-Dallain, et Damh-Dile (Bos diluvii).

Bestia de Letter-Dallain caput humanum habuit; forma folliis fabriliis in reliquâ parte fuit. Equus aquatilis, qui erat in lacu juxta ecclesiam copulavit cum filiâ sacerdotis [ecclesiæ] ita ut generavit hanc Bestiam ex eâ.

waters spread themselves. One of the hurlers (to whom this witch bore particular spite for some insult he had offered herself or one of her daughters) turned off the *faíche* (*faí*, or hurling green) to quench his thirst, but not finding any water, he wandered about in search of a well. He was met by the witch, in disguise, who told him that there was no well near at hand; but that if he went over to a tuft of rushes which she pointed out to him, and pulled one rush therefrom, a well would issue from the earth, in which he might slake his thirst. He did so, and forthwith a deluge of water issued from the earth, which overflowed the plain, and drowned the thirsty youth and all his companions on the hurling green. From the spot where the youth had pulled the rush there issued also an *oll-þíáí*, or huge serpent, which continued to infest the newly formed lake and its vicinity for thousands of years after. At last the Gall Burcach,* who lived in a castle close to the lake, offered his daughter in marriage to any warrior who would rid the neighbourhood of this monster. Many made their appearance and were devoured! At length, a huge desperado of the O'Donovans, who had distinguished himself in the bay of Glandore and the mountains of Carbery by acts of violence and indomitable courage, who had killed the eldest son of O'Sullivan, and escaped from Carbery, despite of his own father, and the Clann-Sullivan, fled to the Gall Burcach, and offered to fight the monster. The Gall Burcach mentioned to him the names of those brave men who had already fallen victims to this monster's fury; but the other observed to him that he had already killed more formidable monsters, and that he would risk the combat for the prize. He encountered the monster, and pierced it with his sword. He obtained the reward sought for, and, in memorial of so great an achievement, the Gall Burcach caused to be sculptured, on a stone over the gateway of his castle, a cubit dexter holding a sword entwined with a serpent proper.

This latter part of the story is evidently an interpolation added by a local story-teller to account for the hand and sword piercing a serpent which was to be seen on a sculptured stone in an old wall of the castle at Gaulstown when I was very young, and which were the arms of Edmond O'Donovan, one of the sons (the eldest as we always believed) of O'Donovan of Castle Donovan and Bawnlahan, in the County of Cork, and the first of that name, who settled in the County of Kilkenny. That he had killed O'Sullivan's son and fled to the Gall Burcach I firmly believe, but that he acquired the arms borne by all the Clann-Donovan, by killing an *oll-þíáí* in Loch Cuillinn, I do not believe.

I trust that no one will suppose, from the style of the above legends,

* Gall Burcach, i.e., Burke the foreigner. This feudal lord traced his descent from Sir William Burke of Ballydooley, in the County of Galway, and possessed broad lands in the barony of Ida. On a monumental slab still existing within the old church of Gaulskill, the descent of Gall Burke is traced to this Sir William; who, it is added, "was Vice-chamberlain to king Edward III.; John Fitzwalter to Edward I., in the County of Kilkenny, in Gawlestowne."

that I think slightly of our national traditional lore. Assuredly I do not, else why this paper? It has usurped too many of my nights and days, it has been the object and the solace of too great a portion of my by-gone years to meet with disrespect from me. But I respect it as a great influence that *has been*, and no longer *is*, or *can be*. It fed the poetical flame within the people's mind, and was the parent of true poetry in the more cultivated: it nourished the latent, instinctive aspirations of the Irish race, gave them aliment, and directed their movements, and rescued their ancestors from the dominion of brutish ignorance; stirred them up with insatiable thirst for true knowledge, which when established on a right basis, will raise this ancient and imaginative people to a truly noble standard among the civilized nations of modern Europe: but its office has been fulfilled; it is no longer necessary to the exigencies of modern society, with which the Irish race must either amalgamate or perish. The only interest it can have is a historical and poetical one; and most men will acknowledge that nothing can be more interesting to us in this point of view, than the progress of our ancestors from rude primæval simplicity to true civilization and positive science.

I myself have lived long enough to experience the decay of the old traditions, and the introduction of something like true science among the natives of the County of Kilkenny. In connexion with the stories above given about the eruption of Loch Cuillinn, and the existence of supernatural water-horses in lakes, it may not be out of place here to notice briefly the ideas which prevailed among the uneducated aborigines of the barony of Ida, when I was a boy. My uncle Patrick, son of Edmond, son of William O'Donovan, who had seen much of the world, and was well acquainted with practical mathematics and the theories of modern philosophers, was wont to amuse himself frequently by explaining to the untaught farmers of his native parish the theories of Copernicus and Newton respecting the laws of motion, attraction, and gravitation, and the astounding fact, which seemed so unnatural to untaught minds, that the earth moved and that the sun was stationary; and I often heard old men of gravity and strong native sense and powers of reasoning, raise many objections to the theories which he endeavoured to explain to them by means of angles, lines and figures, but which they could not understand. The gravest objection which they made to these theories was the modern date of their discovery, and the improbability that God would have allowed such great truths (if truths they were) to remain so long unknown to mankind. To this he used to reply that the ways of Providence were inscrutable; but that, whatever was the cause of men having remained in ignorance of the real laws of nature for so many thousand years, no doubt can now be entertained of the absolute truth of positive science; that its truth is established by the incontestible progress it makes in every civilized nation; that its methods are stamped with certainty, because they are daily extending our real knowledge of things; because the great ex-

perience of many years, and of thousands of intelligences of the most exalted people in all civilized nations, confirms their truth without casting a shadow of suspicion upon them.

To this the old sages of traditional lore raised various shrewd objections, from which I as a listener, then beginning to read the English translation of the "Plurality of Worlds," by Fontenelle, and that of Copernicus, "*De Revolutionibus Orbium Cælestium*," understood that these sages treated the Pythagorean, Copernican and Newtonian theories as dreams of visionary and irreligious madmen; for they stoutly maintained, that the earth is not globular, but flat, and extended in all probability *ad infinitum*, but that no one knows or ever will know its extent, shape, limits, or dimensions. That Commodore Anson did not sail round the earth; that he sailed up and down the oceans, and returned to England after having described a circle around on the earth, not in girth, which was impossible, but on its flat surface, in the same way as an ass or a cow might pass round the surface of a field. The ass or the cow walks round the upper surface of the field, but does not pass under it. In the same way Commodore Anson sailed round the earth! That under the ground* every where, there are oceans of fresh water extending their arms in various directions, as the salt seas and oceans do on its surface. That the water in its natural state is fresh, not salt. That the upper crust of the earth is of various degrees of thickness, but that it is very thin in many places, and has been frequently broken through by the *working* of the water, and not unfrequently by the incantations of sorcerers, which have caused local inundations. That there are oceans of fresh water in the sky, which would inundate the earth, were they not kept suspended by the will of God, except now and again when partially let down in the shape of rain to fertilize the earth for the benefit of man; and that God deigns to pour it down gently or violently according to men's deserts. That rain cannot be in any instance sea-water sucked up by the clouds, as is evident from the fact that it is never salt. That, as rain is sent down from the sky by the permission of God in proportion to the deserts of men, it is sinful in the extreme for men to irrigate their fields, or water their flowers and vegetables, as some gentlemen who followed the new doctrines, were beginning to do, for that if God wished them to flourish he would send his rain to moisten them. In illustration of this truth they quoted a traditional story, which is found, with slight variations, in many parts of Ireland. In the townland of Tinvacouse (Ṭĩṣ̃ ʼʼ ʼʼ ʼʼ ʼʼ, i.e., oven-house), in the barony of Igrine, County of

*These people never heard of the great central fire which is now so fast cooling down! This idea had its origin in Italy and other volcanic countries, where the craters of the volcanoes are said to be the outlets of the great fire in the centre of the earth. In an Irish book called *Sz̃aṭ̃an na h-ʼʼĩṭĩṣ̃e* (the Mirror of Repentance), it is said that hell is in the centre of the earth, as the kernel is in the centre of an apple; but this is an Italian not an Irish idea, as far as I have been able to ascertain.

Kilkenny, as a rich baker, who had taken up the new notions of forcing the growth of vegetables, contrary to the will of God, was on a certain hot summer's day engaged in watering flowers and vegetables in his garden, he was saluted by a remarkable looking stranger, who asked him in a tone of great earnestness and dignity what it was he was doing. The baker replied that he was watering his flowers and vegetables which had suffered from the long drought. The stranger observed that he might lawfully have left that work to God, who knew the time for watering the garden better than any man, and that, if he wished the vegetables to flourish, he would pour down his blessed rain upon them. After saying these words the stranger suddenly disappeared. The baker, who remarked something more than human in the stranger's countenance, felt the force of his observation, and gave up his work of producing "artificial rain." A kind of secret dread and inward horror seized him, and he returned to his oven, where he had left a batch of bread baking under the care of some of his men; but on his return he found the men fast asleep; and opening the oven, which was strongly heated, he saw all the loaves shot out into *green wheat bread* (green wheat *braird*) of the most luxuriant kind. From this the baker inferred that the stranger was a heavenly messenger sent to reprove him for his impious act in irrigating his garden!

This story, which passed as gospel among those sages of traditional lore, was urged by them as proof that man has no right to attempt to supply by labour,* or any artificial means, what God in his bounty is wont to send in due time; and I firmly believe that it was not invented by any knave for the purpose of encouraging idleness, but that it grew out of the peculiar genius, *esprit*, or idiosyncrasy of the people and the kind of knowledge which they possessed. Against the foregoing traditional objections, my uncle Patrick urged, in the plainest language he could think of, the usual arguments given in scientific books, always asserting that Newton's discovery was not a guess, but a positive demonstration; but his arguments vibrated without effect on their ears. He spoke and read the Irish language with great fluency, but his scientific terms of gravitation, attraction, centrifugal and centripetal force, when translated into Irish seemed unmeaning to his untutored auditors, and though he continued for years to explain to them the nature of attraction, gravitation, centrifugal force, &c., by various examples in his own business of a millwright, he never made any real impression upon their minds, until one Sunday, when a remarkable eclipse of the sun took place. On this occasion he was determined to astonish them by the extraordinary exactness of modern science, and knowing from the almanacs that a remarkable eclipse of the sun was to take place on this particular Sunday about twelve o'clock, he got

* Let the curious reader compare this with the fable of the Carter and Hercules in Phædrus, and he will see what an advantage the Pagan Romans had over us.

his watch cleaned and set to the exact time, and met a number of his *tradition* friends in the chapel-yard at Slieveroe, with whom he entered into his usual arguments about modern science. They insisted that Copernicus, Newton, and all modern philosophers were wild dreamers, whose ideas ran counter to the laws of God and nature. Patrick O'Donovan pulled out his watch, and said to them in the Irish language, “*Bíad eclipir (eapíra) ar an ngréin iul a d-íocfaid an rathar*” (there will be an eclipse on the sun before the priest arrives [to celebrate mass]). The people who had often heard the word *eclipir*, and knew that it meant a total or partial darkening of the sun, looked at him with astonishment; and one of the oldest among them asked, “How do you know?” The other replied, “This watch tells me, observe the sun.” In about fourteen minutes the edge of the sun began to darken, and when the priest arrived to celebrate mass, he saw all the congregation looking at the half-darkened sun with an astonishment which bordered on the sublime! and the cause of the astonishment of the most intelligent among the traditionists was, how any man could have known to the second when this darkness was to come over the sun. Patrick O'Donovan then told them that they were too old to learn the science of astronomy; but that to any one who understood the laws which regulated the motion of the planets, the cause of an eclipse of the sun was very evident, and that it was not very difficult to calculate the very time when an eclipse would occur. From this day forward the natives of the parish of Slieveroe began to regard him as a person of no ordinary learning, and came to the conclusion that he must have acquired all this knowledge beyond seas, where he had spent so many years. Notwithstanding his knowledge of practical mathematics and the theories of modern writers, he was a believer in supernatural apparitions, and the most incurable ghost-seer in the whole barony of Ida. He died on the 17th of November, 1831, aged 78 years, and had one of the largest funerals ever seen in his native parish, to convey his mortal remains to the church-yard of Dunkitt.*

Our *written* legends are sufficiently preserved, and they require only translation and illustration; but our oral legends are fast disappearing, and it becomes our duty to preserve them as well as we can, while they still glimmer among the few old men who survive their cotemporaries of the last century.

I look upon Mr. Dunne as a person of genuine Irish and patriotic feelings, and I trust he will not slacken his exertions to preserve those remnants of a former world, when every work of art was ascribed to magic, and in which our present electrifying machines and steam-coaches would be considered the work of the fairies or of the evil one.

* He was the last of the family who was interred in that old church-yard; and the writer erected a small monument, with an inscription in Latin, to mark the grave in which he, and his brothers William and Edmond, are buried.